



**The Corporation of the Township of Brock**

**Councillor Conference Report**

Report Prepared by: Mayor John Grant for Council

Date: Wednesday, August 25, 2021

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**Conference Name**

AMO

**Conference Date and Location**

August 16, 17, 18 2021 London, Ontario Virtual Conference

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**Key Learnings**

Refer to attached seminars on Risk Management, E-Permitting, Broadband, Medical Cannabis Growing, Creative Affordable Housing, MPAC Updates.

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**Attachments**

See attached summaries of each seminar and notes on Minister Forums

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**Recommendations**

Receive for information and refer to staff for review and report where appropriate. Identify 2022 budget implications. Refer to 2023 Strategic Plan Review.

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Respectfully submitted,

Signed Electronically

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Mayor John Grant

Reviewed by,

Signed Electronically

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Ingrid Svelnis  
Chief Administrative Officer

## AMO Conference Report

### Insurance – Risks and Management

Costs to taxpayers to manage claims has been escalating over the last decade. Some of the drivers are lower interest rates on invested premiums, increased catastrophic losses, increasing claim awards, and market withdrawals of a number of insurance and re-insurance providers.

Much of the discussion is about mitigating risk. Identify all property owned or operated by the municipality. Review to identify possible areas to reduce potential claims. Need of proper data collection with updating valuations, claims tracking and maintain proper insurance reserves. That staff incorporate best risk management practices into operations.

### E-Permitting

Municipalities are moving towards e permits and e licenses. Building permits are no longer in paper forms. Face to face meetings with builders no longer required. Scanned files used by staff inspections. This results in complete applications, the builder travel time eliminated. The results are quicker permits and better documentation. For residents adding a deck, pool, etc have a 90% success rate in obtaining permits quickly. MPAC receives and processes assessments faster, thus quicker additions to tax rolls.

Other considerations include sharing or pooling of resources with neighbouring municipalities. E-permitting should be referred to in the Strategic Plan. The building and treasury departments operate more efficiently, provide improved customer service and overall cost savings to municipality.

E-Permitting is eligible for Municipal Modernization Plan grants.

### Broadband

The mandate of the Province is to have broadband connections to every house in Ontario by 2025. Creating equal access to health, social services, and work opportunities no matter the status in society. There is a total of \$7billion from the Province and Federal Government to fund the connections.

Each municipality should identify existing mapping and gaps in service. As Durham Region has taken the lead, Brock should obtain current information and identify work plans. How does provincial/Federal Funding apply to Brock Township.

### Growing of Medical Cannabis

Identified issues include lack of data to determine misuse, non-compliance with building codes, Health Canada is not required to notify municipalities of registered growers. Growers requesting building permits or resident complaints are the only ways for a municipality to identify a registered grow operation.

The Municipality of Pelham in the Niagara Region has attempted to control loss of food producing lands, loss of property values, environmental impacts, noise, odour, lighting with Interim Control By-law, Fortification By-law, a land use impact study, Odourous Industries Nuisance By-Law, Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments. The results are two appeals to the Superior Court, and three appeals to Ontario Land Tribunal.

AMO in partnership with OMAFRA and the University of Guelph are developing studies to address the issues with legal grow ops. Final report with recommendations will be in 2022-2023. Including best practices, good neighbour policy, a data base of by-laws, Official Plans, and Ontario Land Tribunal decisions.

### Creative Affordable Housing

This session dealt with the experience of three different housing projects. Sault Saint Marie provided low cost home ownership plan by identifying a neighbourhood in decline. Purchased a house with Federal funds, created job experience for skills training students to repair the house, add legal and closing fees, and sold the house to a family by the city co-signing for a mortgage.

The second project was in London, Ontario. A population of over 500,000, the city identified homeless veterans and created supportive housing in partnership with the Department of Veteran Affairs, the Royal Canadian Legion, Veteran Emergency Transition funds with support through St. Joseph Health Centre. Eligible veterans were identified on the Bi-Name List. 12 Units were built. The presenter stated that all municipalities must have accurate Bi-Name Lists to have any chance of success and a plan for supports.

An international organization called Abbeyfield has built and operated in several areas on the province including Northern Ontario. Communal housing is established for 12-15 persons that can live independently. Target market is lower income seniors and the property is operated by community volunteers. There is a paid cook and property maintenance of communal areas. Such costs are included in the tenant rent. Appropriate for consideration in small communities with an existing property that can be converted.

### MPAC Update

2022 assessments will be based on January 1, 2016 values. Normally on a 4 year cycle, the next valuation review will be announced this fall. Home inspections have restarted where other methods of determining assessments are not available.

During 2020 there was a 15% increase in home improvements including 7,000 swimming pools. Total new assessment in 2020 was \$37B. \$20B so far in 2021.

Upper tier municipalities have been given more flexibility on commercial rates. The Business Education Tax has been reduced by the Province.

The assessment rolls will move from paper to electronic. Platforms are being built that will allow for information sharing, and integrating digital building permit process that will add assessments quicker.

Should be a quicker revenue stream for the municipality. However, 73% of municipalities do not have the online platform owing to staff resources and costs. Need to explore grant opportunities provided by the Province.

#### Minister Forum and AMO Announcements

The Gas Tax has been renamed the Canada Community Building Fund. There is a one time doubling to municipalities in 2021. AMO has called upon the Federal Government to make the doubling permanent.

\$47m additional health funding in 2022 to municipalities. Re-commitment to 3,100 new hospital beds.

A reminder that AMO provides training programs for newly elected councillors.

An additional \$50m to the Municipal Modernization Plan.

Every acre of MZO development will equal two new acres of protected greenbelt.

Municipalities are required to acquire new portable communication radios. Due to the additional costs, volunteer Fire Departments have requested an exemption.

Municipalities are required to identify wrap around, supportive care requirements. There will be more investment in virtual health.

Call to reduce red tape for immigrants to enter the workforce.

FOI requests have seen huge increases. Still paper based or CD platforms. Require updating.

COVID-19 has shown issues with housing homeless. All providers must develop a Bi-Name List. Need to renegotiate the National Housing Strategy. There needs to be upper government funding for the operations of health and social services towards that at risk.

Identify huge POA backlog. Many to be resolved through early dispute resolution.

\$180m retraining fund for those who have lost jobs in order to fill areas of labour shortage. Including funding for 20,000 PSW students.

AMO has requested increased funding for libraries.

300,000 houses in Ontario need to be internet connected. Must be done by 2025.

Respectively submitted by

John Grant

Mayor Township of Brock

August 25, 2021.